

29 Aug 02 Employee Information Exchange – Understanding Your Future

29 Aug 0600 Session:

Q1. Would someone in the DIS who was previously employed in the PMO qualify in a RIF for a job in the PMO?

Answer: Yes, if the employee meets the qualifications for a position with PMO.

Q2. What will be used by CPOC RIF team to determine employee qualifications?

Answer: The RIF team will use the information contained in the employees OPF as well as information contained in an OF 612, which will be completed by employees prior to any RIF action.

Q3. Do I have to apply or initiate registration for Priority Placement Program (PPP)?

Answer: Yes, the employee must initiate registration when CPAC announces the registration period. However, if a employee is placed in a lower graded position at the time of the RIF, then it is mandatory that the employee is registered into the PPP-R program where the system attempts (for two years) to find you a job at your previously held grade.

Q4. Can I attend Transition related training and not be charged annual leave?

Answer: Generally speaking – Yes, as long as the transition related assistance is provided on post. The CARE Team is working on a policy memo that will provide further guidance.

Q5. Will PPP attempt to place me in non-DoD job vacancies as well as DoD job vacancies?

Answer: PPP will attempt to place affected employees in DoD job vacancies only.

Q6. Do you lose money if you are downgraded?

Answer: If an employee is placed in a lower graded position due to a reduction in force (RIF) action, they may be eligible for Grade Retention. Grade retention is mandatory if the employee meets all three of the following requirements: 1. The employee must be serving under a permanent appointment (not temporary or term) 2. The employee must have been placed in a position under the GS or prevailing wage system (FWS) 3. The employee must have served for at least 52 consecutive weeks at a grade or grades higher than that of the position in which placed by RIF. If an employee has less than 52 weeks at a higher grade, they may receive pay retention. An employee entitled to grade retention retains that grade for 2 years beginning on the date the employee is placed in the lower graded position. An employee on grade retention receives within-grade increases and 100 percent of any general increases in pay. An employee whose 2-year grade retention period ends may receive pay

retention if specific requirements are met. The rate of pay an employee is entitled to under pay retention is the lesser of the following: the employee's former rate of basic pay (the pay received immediately before placement in the lower grade) or 150 percent of the highest rate of basic pay for the employee's current position (the lower graded position). An employee receiving pay retention is entitled to 50 percent of any general increases in pay in the maximum rate of the employee's grade at the time of the increase.

Q7. Can I continue to get severance pay if I accept another job--Federal or private industry?

Answer: If an employee is appointed to the Federal Government under a qualifying appointment or the District of Columbia, severance payments are immediately stopped. If an employee is reemployed in the Federal Government on a temporary appointment after a break of more than 3 calendar days, severance pay will be suspended temporarily. Employment in the private sector has no effect on an employee's severance pay entitlement. See the Employee Resource Guide (CA) tab 6, page 4 for more information on Severance Pay.

Q8. How is severance pay paid--lump sum, monthly?

Answer: Normally, severance pay is paid through a series of payments aligned with the employee's biweekly pay periods prior to separation. The Department of Defense has the authority to grant, upon the employee's request, payment of severance pay in one lump sum. If an employee takes the lump sum payment and then returns to work before the time that they would have stopped receiving biweekly payments if severance pay had been paid normally, the employee must repay a portion of the lump sum payment.

Q9. If I get a private sector job, do I pay back severance pay?

Answer: See answer for question 7.

Q10. If I accept a PPP offer six months after I receive severance pay, do I pay severance pay back?

Answer: No, as long as the severance pay stops when the employee is placed into a qualifying appointment with the Federal government.

Q11. If I'm separated and find another job in private sector, how long can I stay on PPP?

Answer: The employee will remain on PPP for 1 year.

Q12. Why can't the MEO be released now?

Answer: The Source Selection Board and Contracting Officer still have cost issues to be negotiated with the bidders. Releasing the MEO now would give contractors unfair and competitive advantage over the in-house bid during final cost negotiations.

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Q13. Can qualifications for the various trades be made available?

Answer: CPAC will print a list of OPM qualification requirements for various USAG job series and will distribute with these answers. Qualification standards can also be viewed online at:

For GS employees: <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/index.htm>

For WG employees: <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/x-118c/index.htm>

Q14. RESUMIX system is not working--Are they going to get it fixed?

Answer: There have been some systems problems recently, but most have been corrected. If you are still experiencing problems, contact CPAC for assistance.

Q15. Will a printout be provided to me showing my dollars for retirement if I'm accepted for a VERA?

Answer: You should request an estimate from the ABC center when you sign-up during the VERA/VSIP open window. You will not get a final (exact) number until OPM performs the calculation at your retirement.

Q16. Can I jump into another PPP Zone?

Answer: Yes, but you have to first obtain DoD CARE Office approval. You should be aware that you may be offered a position in far northern, southern or outer sector of the new zone. For example, if your target is to work in a Florida location, the offer may be in Georgia.

Q17. Can I continue in PPP after declining a PPP offer in a CA or BRAC work center at another Installation?

Answer: Yes, if you indicated that you would not consider positions involved in a CA or BRAC during PPP registration.

Q18. Can Annual Leave and Sick Leave be added towards my retirement?

Answer:

For CSRS employees, only sick leave balance can be included in calculation by full months credit.

For FERS employees, Annual Leave is paid as a lump sum and does not count toward retirement. Under both the CSRS and FERS retirement systems, sometimes if a VERA is offered and the employee is short of creditable service for eligibility, then

annual leave may be used to meet the early retirement requirements. Unused sick leave is not converted into creditable service for any purpose. (There is a limited exception for CSRS employees who transferred to FERS, please check with ABC-C if this applies to your personal situation)

Q19. Can you exceed the maximum annual leave carry-over of 240 hours during a CA study?

Answer: The 240 hours cannot be exceeded. The only exception is when mission requirements have prevented an employee from using leave; in which case, the supervisor and USAG Commander must approve a written request from the employee. Contact CPAC for the restored annual leave procedure.

Q20. When will I actually go onto PPP and PPP-R?

Answer: Once the RIF is conducted and the employee receives a RIF notice, they will be registered for PPP. If the employee is to be placed into a lower graded position, they will be registered in PPP-R.

Q21. Will VSIP II be offered during the CA RIF?

Answer: As of today, VSIP II will not be offered; however, that could change prior to the RIF.

Q22. Can someone get a health insurance waiver to allow them to carry over health insurance if they are separated? An employee does not have the minimum amount of time and wants to ensure he has continued health insurance coverage?

Answer: Your enrollment will end, subject to a 31-day extension of coverage, when you separate from service (unless you can retire and continue your enrollment). Your coverage will continue without cost to you for 31 days after your enrollment ends for any reason, except when you cancel it. During that time, you can elect Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC) or convert to an individual health benefits contract with your FEHB plan.

Also, the date can be extended if the employee has enough annual leave,.....an employee may use Annual Leave in order to stay on the rolls (even after the effective date of what would be separation) in order to establish initial eligibility for additional insurance coverage. The employee needs to "have" the annual leave in order to use it to stay on the rolls long enough to be eligible to retire.

5CFR 351.606 (b) states: Use of annual leave to reach initial eligibility for retirement or continuance of health benefits. (1) An agency shall make a temporary exception under this section to retain an employee who is being involuntarily separated under this part, and who elects to use annual leave to remain on the agency's rolls after the effective date the employee would otherwise have been separated by reduction in force, in order to establish initial eligibility for immediate retirement under 5 USC 8336 , 8412, or 8414, and/or to establish initial eligibility under 5 USC 8905 to continue health benefits coverage into retirement.

Q23. Can you accept a job with the CA contractor and still remain on PPP?

Answer: Yes.

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Q24. Does being a veteran affect the amount you can get under Tuition Assistance?

Answer: No effect.

Q25. If I take a course that is job-related, how much is reimbursed?

Answer: If approved by management as job-related, 100% of the tuition is reimbursed if you pass the course with a grade of "C" or higher.

Q26. If I am approved to take a course that is job-related, can I take the training during duty hours?

Answer: You can take the training during duty hours as long as management pre-approves duty hour attendance (it must not impact mission accomplishment).

Q27. Can someone who earlier worked as a student:

Get credit for that time in a RIF? Is the time prorated if they worked part time?

Answer: Yes, if the employee was in a paid appointment.

Get credit for that time towards retirement?

Answer: The time counts towards the employees' service computation date, but not towards retirement. Employees in a temp appointment do not pay into the retirement system.

Q28. When you are placed on PPP, can you register in a job series other than the one you currently occupy?

Answer: Yes, an employee may register for occupational series for which the employee is fully qualified.

Q29. Once registered under PPP, how long can I stay on the program?

Answer: One Year.

Q30. If immunization shots are a medical condition of MEO positions, what is impact on employees during a RIF?

Answer: Subsequent to the State of Garrison and following meetings with OPM and between the Commander and the IAMAW Union, the status of being immunized or

not immunized will have “no” effect on the RIF process. Therefore, a non-immunized employee can bump or displace an immunized employee and vice versa. The retention, bumping, re-treating decisions will be based on OPM RIF procedures; immunizations and related medical qualifications will not be a factor. However, management still has a requirement that employees receive immunizations when working in potentially contaminated areas. Management will continue to require employees to sign a form that they agree to take the immunization shots on a voluntary basis.

Q31. Can you accept another job and continue to draw severance pay--either Federal or private industry? Do you have to pay-back severance pay if another job is accepted?

Answer: See answer for question 7.

Q32. If I'm a displaced federal employee, is there paid (free) training offered to me?

Answer:

Yes, there will be paid (free) training available under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA); however, we cannot predict how much will be available.

Workers who lose their jobs in mass layoffs and others who have been laid off and are unlikely to return to their jobs can take advantage of the following JTPA services: early intervention programs, occupational skill training, job search assistance, support services and relocation assistance.

The JTPA provides job-training services for economically disadvantaged adults and youth, dislocated workers and others who face significant employment barriers. The act, which became effective on October 1, 1983, seeks to move jobless individuals into permanent self-sustaining employment.

State and local governments, together with the private sector, have primary responsibility for development, management and administration of training programs under JTPA. Governors have approval authority over locally developed plans and are responsible for monitoring program compliance.

Following receipt of RIF letters, displaced employees will be briefed by JTPA representatives who will describe the program and explain employee rights and procedures of the Job Training Partnership Act.

Q33. There are rumors that dangerous viruses are being disposed of/emptied into the sanitary sewer system from SAIC:

Can you publish a list of these viruses?

What is being done to protect DIS employee safety?

Answer: To our knowledge, there have been "no" dangerous viruses disposed of/emptied into the sanitary sewer system from SAIC. If there is an individual that has direct knowledge of pathogens being disposed of improperly, it is their duty to notify the proper authorities immediately. The drain is only one pathway out of the laboratory, and each path has its own requirements. Standing Operating Procedures are in place at NCI for each procedure and they must be adhered to. These requirements may be viewed at Section D-1, Waste Management: <http://web.ncifcrf.gov/Campus/safety/compliance/index.stm>

A list of special pathogens registered at NCI is available at the Installation Safety Office.

DIS is being protected through the use of controls in the laboratory. When working on the sanitary sewer DIS employees should be following DIS written policy and procedures. Employees should perform a Risk Assessment and Job Hazard Analysis for each job that differs from their published procedures. Employees are instructed if they feel something is unsafe to stop work and contact their supervisor or safety office. DIS employees are adequately protected against the hazards associated when working in and around the post sanitary sewer systems merely by following the following basic safety procedures:

- No eating, smoking or drinking.
- Wear appropriate gloves.
- Wear appropriate clothing.
- Wear appropriate eye protection.
- Do not expose open cuts, wounds etc. to potential contamination.
- Wash hands after completion of work.
- Take a shower if soiled (through unforeseen mishap).

Q34. When will the MEO be shared with the workforce?

Answer: The MEO will be shared a few days after the initial decision announcement, which is currently planned for 7 Jan 03.

Q35. When will we know if we have a job?

Answer: You will know after completion of the RIF, currently scheduled to be completed on 18 Sept 03.

Q36. Concern that a DIS employee asked/identified training and has heard nothing back.

Answer: The employee should contact his/her supervisor, administrative office or training coordinator to obtain a response or follow-up on the training.

Q37. Will a training class qualify someone for a job in a RIF?

Answer: A training class alone does not qualify an employee for a job. The employee needs to demonstrate how the training was used in the work environment.

Q38. Can previous military experience be used for qualifications?

Answer: *Military experience*--Military service that is creditable for veterans' preference or that is the basis for restoration to the former civilian position should either be evaluated as an extension of the work the individual was doing immediately before entry into the Armed Forces, or on its own merits, whichever is more beneficial to the individual. In instances where employment in an occupation interrupted by military service was on a part-time basis, the extension of that experience is creditable on the same part-time basis. (See 5 CFR 353 for more information on restoration rights and crediting military service.)

- *Extension of prior civilian experience*--Creditable military service can be counted as an extension of the work the individual was engaged in immediately prior to entry into service. ("Immediately prior to" is defined as within the 90-day period preceding entry into military service.) In instances where an individual accepted fill-in employment while awaiting induction, he or she is considered as having been employed in his or her regular occupation "immediately prior to" entry into military service, if the period of fill-in employment did not exceed 90 days. In crediting time spent in military service as an extension of time spent in civilian occupations, military service can be credited either as an extension of the regular employment or of the fill-in employment, *whichever is more advantageous to the individual*. All military experience evaluated on this basis will be credited at the same level of difficulty and responsibility as the prior civilian experience.
- *Military experience on its own merits*--If the actual military experience is to be evaluated for credit, it is particularly important that it is evaluated on the basis of the duties performed, rather than on the basis of the military rank of the individual.

Q39. Will the workforce be given on duty time for preparation of resumes or OF-612s?

Answer: Yes

Q40. Are OF-612s the document needed for updating your OPF for RIF?

Answer: OF-612's are the recommended document since it has replaced the SF-171 and contains important information that may not be included in a resume, such as month/year of the experience and if it was part-time or full-time employment. Two areas, which are critical in determining qualifications for employees.

Q41. Under PPP, what happens if I don't get a job after two years?

Answer: An employee is on PPP for 1 year.

Q42. How many potential bidders are there?

Answer: Federal Acquisition regulations prevent USAMRAA from releasing any information on the bidders. This is partly due to the need to protect bidder proposals, such as company names, financial, technical data, etc. from being available to competitors.

Q43. Who will do employee jobs while they are off doing training?

Answer: We feel this will not have a negative impact on our mission. Managers from each organization are developing plans to meet this requirement and will attempt to adjust work schedules to cover employee workload while in training.

Q44. Does training have to be approved before the course is taken?

Answer:

In accordance with AR 690-400, the Installation Training Coordinator is the approving official for civilian training. Employees and supervisors shouldn't confuse that if their supervisor says OK, that this is approval to enroll or attend training.

All training must be approved (by the Installation Training Coordinator) prior to enrollment or actually beginning a course. See below:

C 2, AR 690-400

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Chapter 410

Subchapter 5. Training Through Non-Government Facilities

5-1. INTRODUCTION

a. General.

(1) Delegation of authority in DA for approving training in non-Government facilities is covered in paragraph 3-6e. No employee will be assigned to training or permitted to enroll in a course in a non-Government training facility, regardless of course length, before the proper official grants approval.

Requests for approvals after employees have en-rolled or actually begun the training must be disapproved. Employees who enroll in a non-Government training course without written prior approval will be personally responsible for the total training cost.

Q45. Why is current training NOT loaded in the personnel system and OPFs?

Answer: Training courses are recorded in the employee data in MODERN. Training DD Forms 1556's are no longer maintained in the employees OPF per OPM. Training courses that an employee has attended can be documented in an OF-612 and placed into the OPF.

Q46. How do people who are NOT computer literate get their resumes completed?

Answer: Employees should contact either the Army Community Services (ACS), the Detrick Center for Training and Education Excellence (DCTEE), your organization's administrative office or any CARE Team member for resume support. DCS (x3-3315) will help you type or prepare a resume. Also, training on building a resume is available by contacting Raquel Cajudo at x3-3315.

Q47. Can you provide a website for retirement calculations.

Answer: OPM has posted a calculator, which you can use to get an estimate of a deposit amount for retirement service credit. Please visit the website at <http://apps.opm.gov/deposits/index.cfm>. To use the calculator effectively, you will need to know whether you are covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS); the date your retirement coverage started; whether you were an employee in a special category during the period of employment for which you are performing the calculation; the dates of the employment period when retirement deductions were not withheld from your pay; and, all of the rates of pay you received during the period of employment and their effective dates. If you are more than 1 year from retirement and would like an estimate, go to the Army Benefits Center-Civilian homepage at <https://www.abc.army.mil>, click on "Benefit Change", logon to EBIS through the POE, click on "Retirement", and then click on "Personal Statement of Benefits" or "Annuity Estimate". This will give you a general estimate

Q48. If I already used severance pay, can I get severance pay again?

Answer: The total amount of severance pay is limited to one year's salary. If an employee receives severance pay for a time, then returns to Federal employment and is separated again, the employee is entitled to further severance pay but not to exceed a combined period of one year. This is a lifetime limitation.

Q49. If I got RIFd, exhausted severance pay, do I ever get my retirement--do I get a deferred annuity?

Answer: We are not sure whether we recorded/transcribed this question correctly. If not, the employee should contact either the CPAC or ABC-C to clarify the question. Based on our interpretation of the question, once an employee has received or exhausted severance pay, he/she can receive a retirement if they have the minimum number of years vested in their retirement system, and other required criteria are met. The employee should contact either the ABC Center or CPAC for the minimum age and other requirements, as these criteria are different for CSRS and FERS.

Q50. Does ABC-C have TTY capability for hearing impaired?

Answer: Yes, contact the Benefit Counselor for the Hearing Impaired at:
1-877 ARMY TDD (1-877-276-9833)

Q51. What does veteran preference do for a TERM employee during a RIF?

Answer: Term employees compete with each other during the first round of a RIF. Veteran preference helps place the employee higher on the retention register. There are 3 subgroups for Veteran Preference. The highest ranked subgroup is AD, which is for veterans with a service-connected disability of 30 percent or more. Subgroup A that is all other employees entitled to veteran preference. And the last subgroup is B, which are employees not entitled to veteran preference.

Q52. Does time on severance pay count toward retirement?

Answer: No, the period for which severance pay is paid shall not be regarded as a period of Federal service or employment for the employee. Severance pay is not used for computation of any other benefit for Federal employees.

Q53. Can I get a severance pay and work another non-Federal job?

Answer: See answer for question 7.

Q54. What is management doing to ensure that the workforce is qualified and trained for what the jobs will be in the MEO (e.g. multi-skilled jobs)?

Answer: As soon as the initial decision is announced (currently scheduled for 7 Jan 03), management will start cross-training of employees, where needed, for the MEO positions.